



2021 Host Country Staff Survey

Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning



2021 Host Country Staff Survey Table of Contents

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I. Introduction

2021 Host Country Staff Survey (HCSS)

Building on the success of previously administered surveys starting in 2014, the 2021 Host Country Staff Survey (HCSS) continues to tap into the wealth of experience and knowledge found among our host country staff. As a crucially important component of the Peace Corps' operations and mission, host country staff offer a unique perspective on identifying agency successes and challenges including: building a more inclusive and diverse organization, broad insights into training needs and additional insight into the work of Volunteers.

The HCSS survey solicits feedback from employees whose work is vital to Peace Corps operations but whose viewpoints were previously unavailable to agency management at headquarters. The data received through the HCSS complements the Peace Corps' other performance data sources, including the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) of U.S. direct-hire (USDH) staff and the Annual Volunteer Survey (AVS).

The HCSS is distributed online to a multicultural and/or multilingual community of respondents. All post staff who are hired as foreign service nationals (FSNs) or personal services contractors (PSCs) are eligible to participate in the HCSS, regardless of whether they are nationals of the host country, the United States, or a third country.

The first HCSS, piloted in 2014, focused on measuring two objectives from the agency's legacy strategic plan. In 2015, all core questions were retained, while the scope of the survey expanded slightly to offer broader insight. Following improvements to the survey instrument implemented in 2016, the 2017 survey retained as much consistency as possible, while adding questions to gain greater insight into staff learning and development preferences and team cohesion.

(Continue)

2021 Host Country Staff Survey (HCSS)

The 2018 Host Country Staff Survey reflected extensive changes, due to similar results over the past three years and based on extensive stakeholder feedback. While some important questions used for agency-wide metrics have been retained, a number of new questions were added and older questions removed in order to provide fresh insight into our overseas staff.

The 2020 Host Country Staff Survey retained all core questions from the 2019 survey with the addition of evacuation section. The 2021 Host Country Staff Survey retained majority of core questions from the 2020 survey with following changes:

- Questions related to direct interaction with Peace Corp Volunteers (PCVs) were removed due to the fact that there have not been PCVs serving in host countries since the 2020 global evacuation.
- Small number of questions were added or modified to collect more detailed feedback.
- Telework and PCV Re-Entry related questions were added.

Lastly, the survey is offered in English, Spanish, French, and Russian.

II. Top-Line Findings

2021 HCSS Top-Line Findings

The 2021HCSS recorded 76% response rate, It is important to note that all subsequent references to “staff” in this report refer only to those who participated in the 2021 HCSS and do not reflect the views and opinions of all overseas staff. Survey results must be viewed in light of the constraints and limitations outlined in Appendix A.

The staff who participated in this year’s survey overwhelmingly reported that they were satisfied working for the Peace Corps (94.4%).

In addition:

- **82% of respondents feel that they were valued by Peace Corps Washington**
- **More than 4 in 5 respondents believe that they were treated fairly by their supervisor/team leader (85%) and by senior post leadership (88%)**
- **More than 3 in 4 respondents report morale among their staff is high**
- **91% of respondents feel their team works well together**
- **More than 4 in 5 respondents reported feeling personal empowerment with respect to work processes**

(Continue)

2021 HCSS Top-Line Findings

- Under the theme of “learning and training”, 83% report that they are satisfied with their job training
- Under the theme of “staff work”, more than 9 of 10 respondents believe that their team work well with other teams at their post
- Under the theme of “responsiveness”, more than 4 in 5 respondents reported that they are confident responding to Volunteer safety and security related incidents (90%) and to Volunteer sexual assault situations (81%)
- Under the theme of “diversity and inclusion”, 92% of respondents agree that Peace Corps policies and programs promote workplace diversity
- Under the theme of “telework”, more than 9 of 10 respondents reported that they can perform their job with no or minimal issues
- Under the theme of “volunteer re-entry”, 95% of respondents feel confident that they will be able to perform well when vaccinated Peace Corps Volunteers re-enter to their post

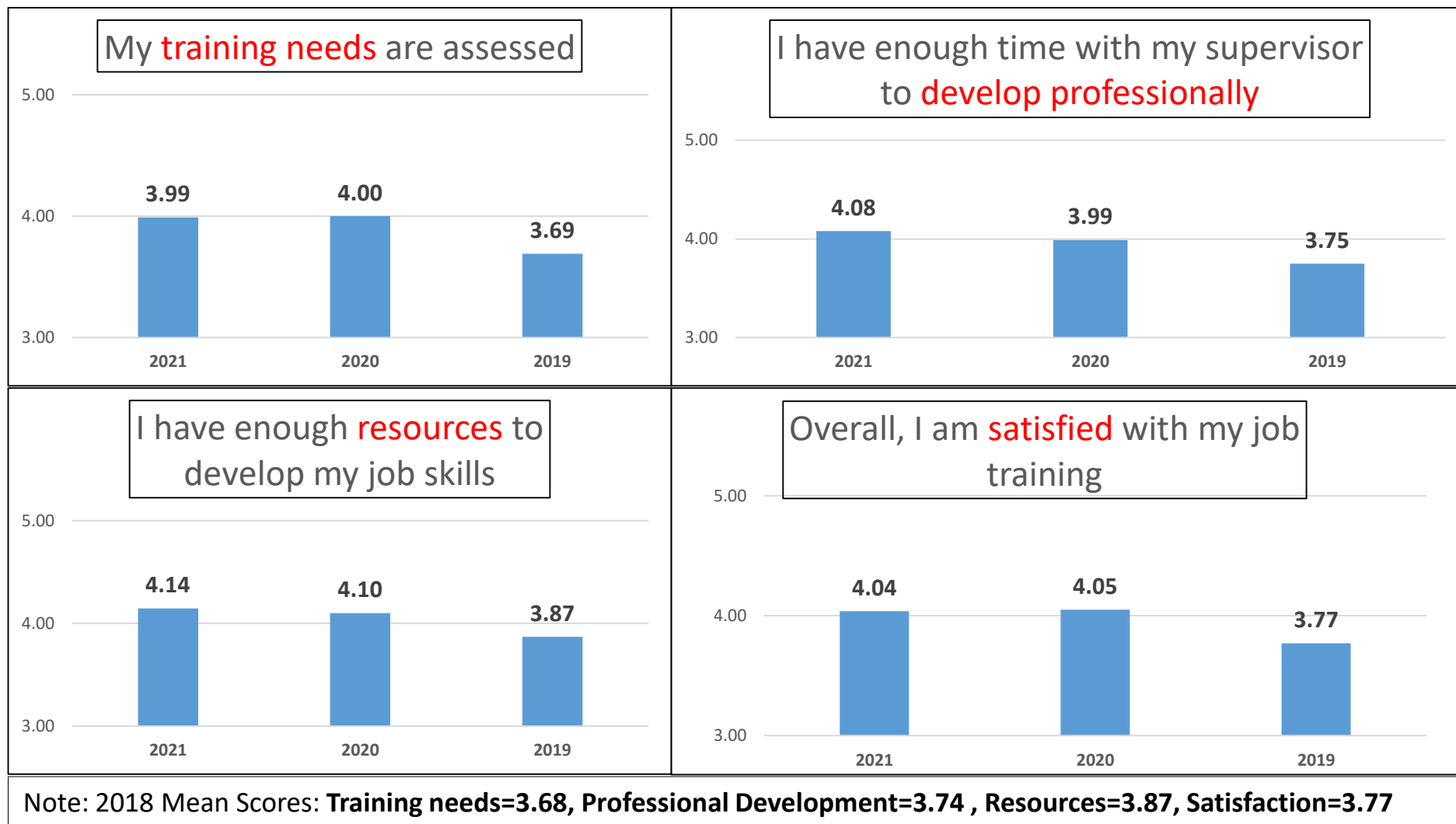
III. Findings in Detail

1. Learning and Training
2. Staff Work
3. Responsiveness
4. Diversity and Inclusion
5. Improving Post Operation
6. Telework
7. Re-Entry

Learning and Training

Strongly Agree = 5 - Strongly Disagree = 1

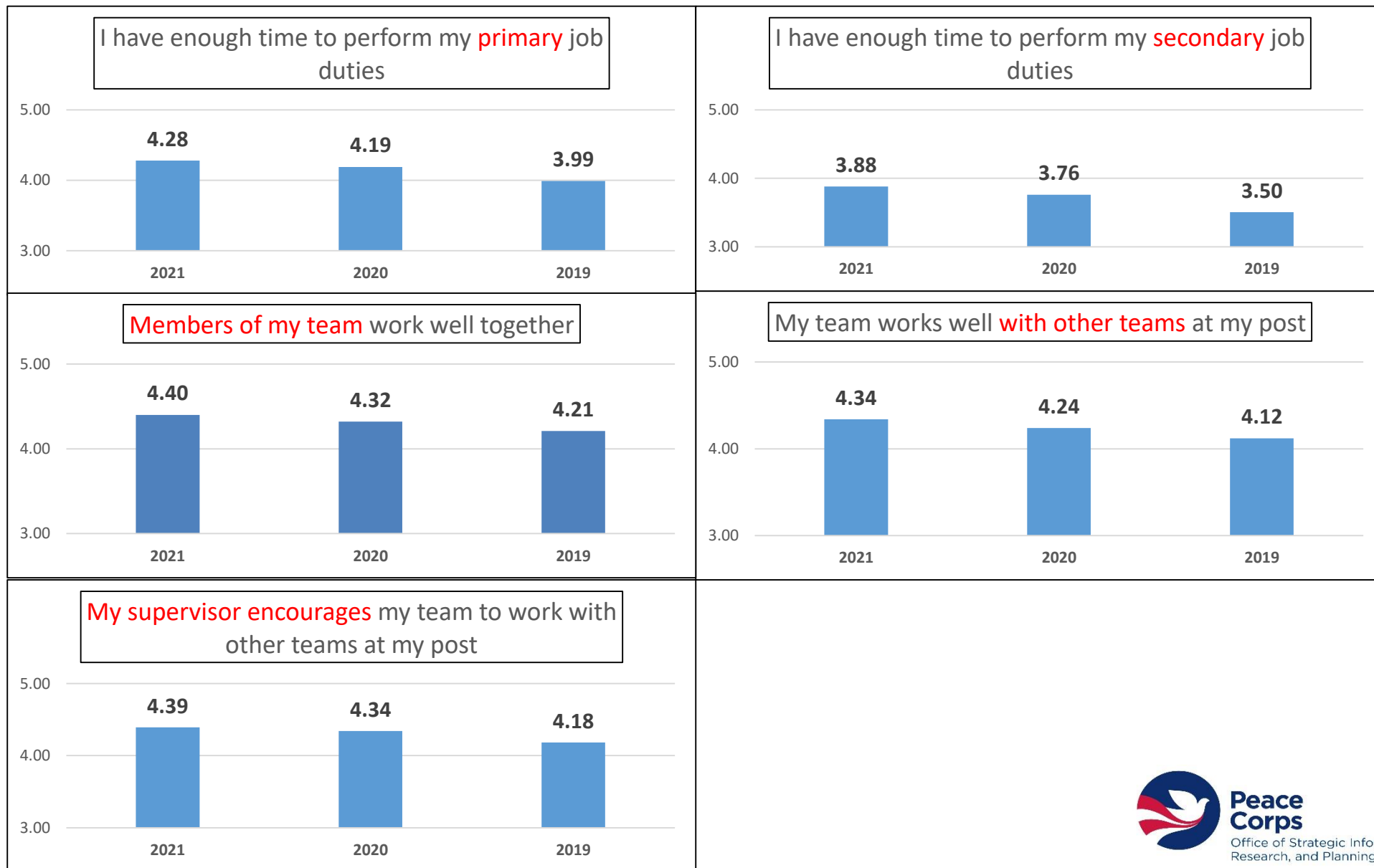
2021 global mean scores, calculated from the 5 point Likert scale, on all four Learning and Training related questions are almost same as the scores in 2020 survey. These scores are significantly higher than those in 2019 and 2018.



Staff Work

Strongly Agree = 5 - Strongly Disagree = 1

Year over year comparison of global mean scores indicates steady increase from 2019 to 2021 in all questions regarding time to perform primary and secondary job duty, within and inter-team cooperation, and supervisor's encouragement to work with other teams at post

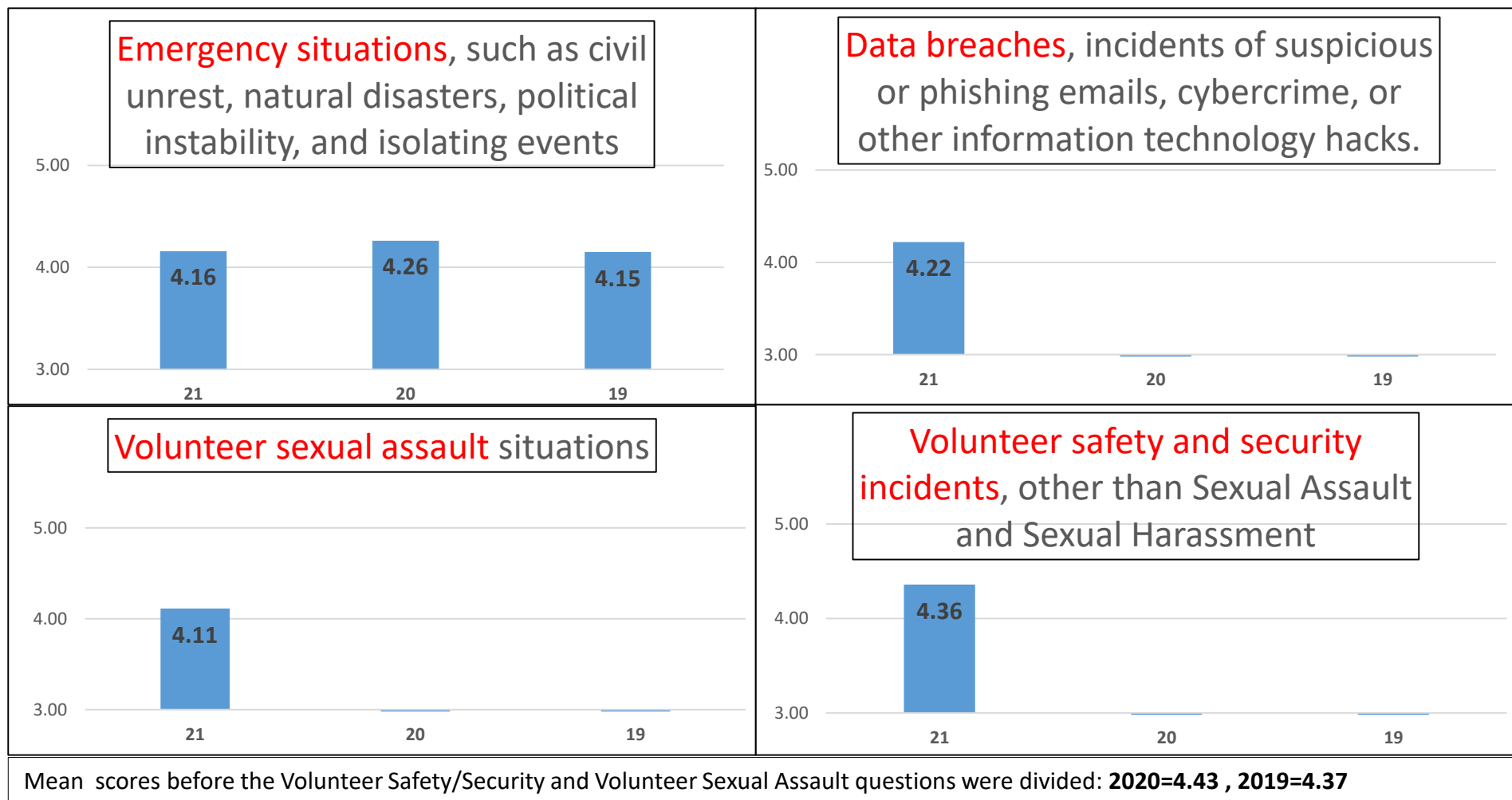


Responsiveness

To what degree do you feel confident responding to the following issues?

Very Confident = 5 - Very Unconfident = 1

2021 global mean score for the staff confidence in responding to emergency situations (4.16) is lower than that in 2020 (4.26). In 2021 survey, following stakeholder input, “Volunteer Safety and Security Incidents” question in previous years was branched into two questions of sexual assault and non-sexual assault safety and security incidents and a new question on data breaches is added.



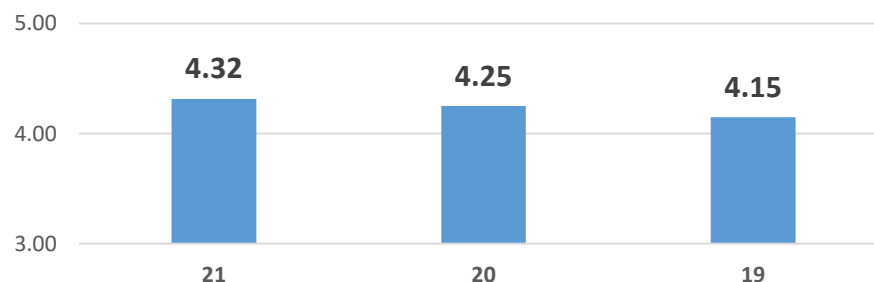
Diversity and Inclusion

To what extent do you agree or disagree that ...

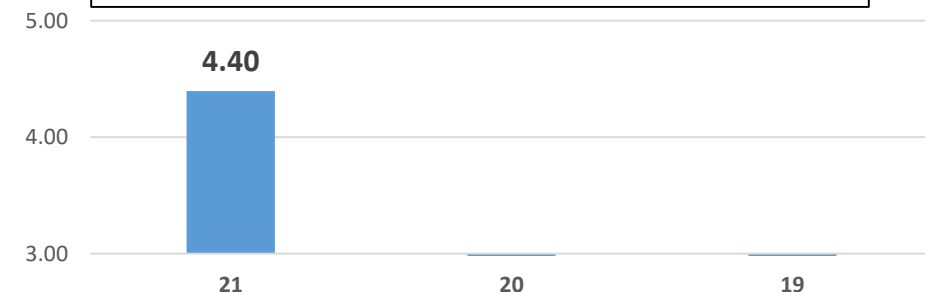
Strongly Agree = 5 - Strongly Disagree = 1

2021 global mean scores of D&I questions are positive and well-balanced among Managers/supervisors (4.32), Peace Corps (4.40), and Staff themselves (4.38). D&I score for managers/supervisors increased steadily from 2019 to 2021, while that of staff confidence in D&I remains almost same. “Peace Corps policies and Programs promote workplace diversity” is a new question in the 2021 survey.

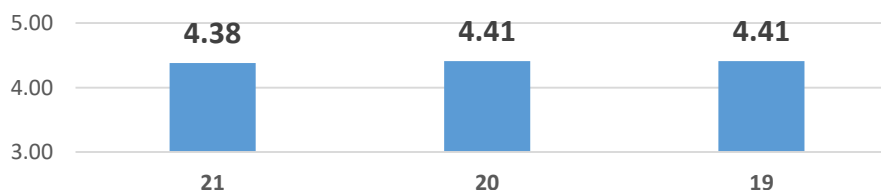
Managers/supervisors at your post work well with employees of different backgrounds



Peace Corps policies and programs promote workplace diversity (including, but not limited to...



I feel confident in my ability to support Volunteers with diverse identities (including, but not...

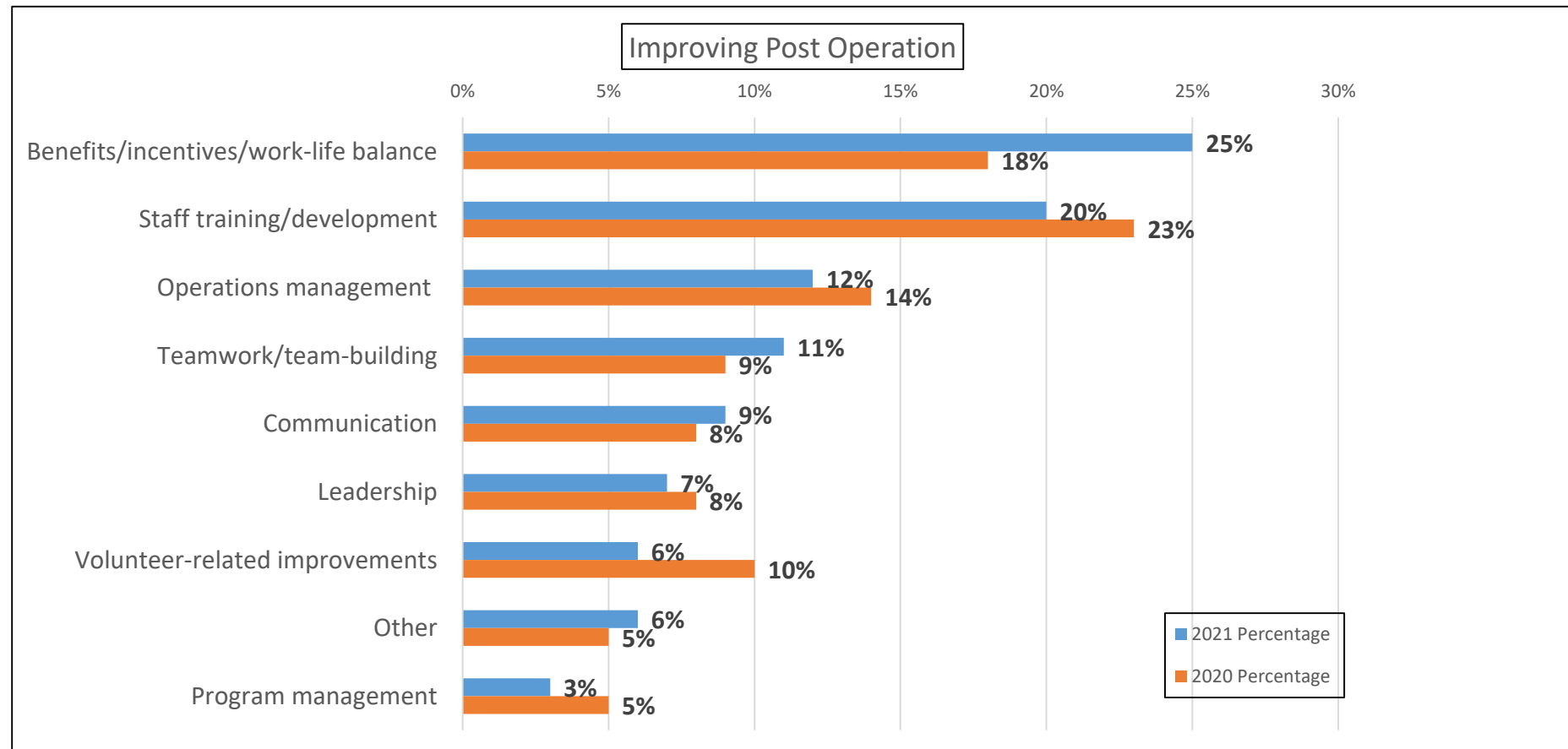


Note: full statement in the parenthesis in the questions is (including, but not limited to diversity based on race, gender identity, ability, religion, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation or socio-economic status)

Improving Post Operation

Please select one topic for improvement that you think would make operations run more effectively at your post

In 2021, 25% of respondents think that operations would improve with more benefits, including higher pay and work-life balance, which is a 7% increase from 2020. Staff development/training decreased from 23% in 2020 to 20% in 2021 and became the second most selection in 2021.



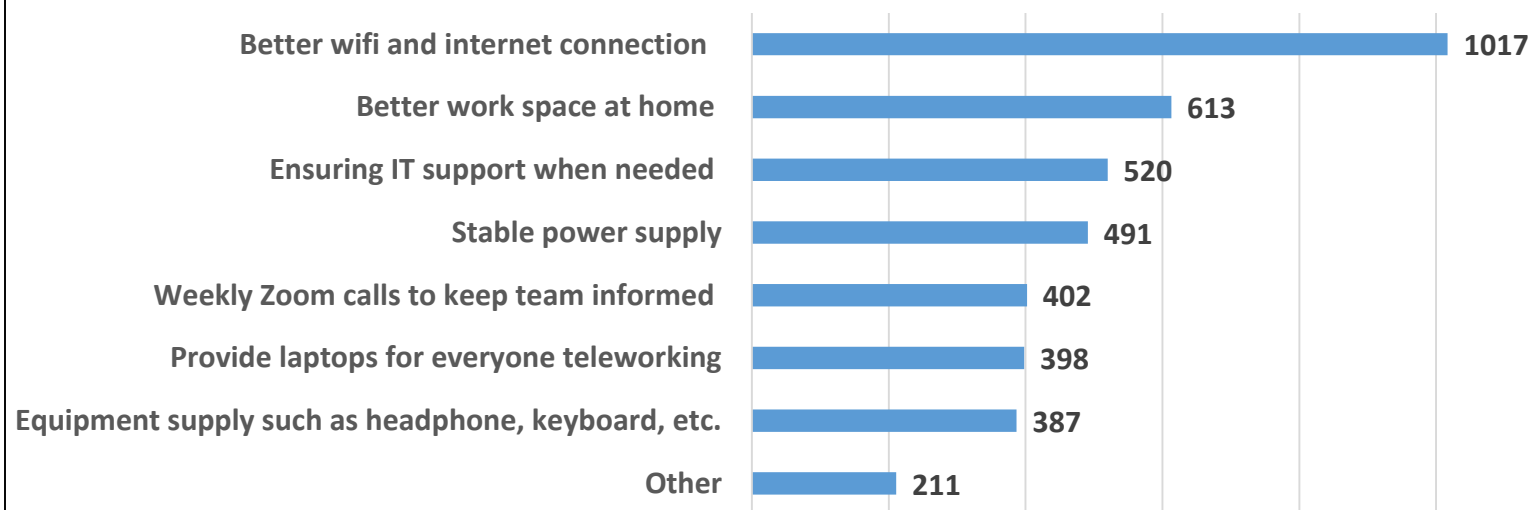
Telework 1

91% of respondents telework, at the time of survey

91% of respondents were tele-working at the time of survey. Of them, 73.5% reported that their supervisors managed staff with no issues, while 57.7% reported that they had some issues in their teleworking job performance. The most mentioned teleworking issues for respondents is the wifi and internet connection, followed by better work space, IT support, and so on

Questions	Perform w/ No Issues	Perform w/ Some Issues	Perform w/ Many Issues	Can't Perform
QA9-How has your supervisor managed staff during telework?	73.5%	24.2%	2.0%	0.4%
QA8-While teleworking, are you able to perform your job?	33.1%	57.7%	7.5%	1.7%

Please select topics that you think would make your telework more effective, select all that apply.



Telework 2

91.3% of respondents telework, at the time of survey

Respondents identified 211 “Other Issues” in the open-ended format, and 28% of them reported no issues at all with the current telework arrangements.

Open-ended Comments (211)		%	Samples of Comments
Related to Given Choices	Internet connection	11%	PC needs to pay for data use, power, and wifi services
	Weekly Zoom calls	11%	There are too many Zoom calls
	Equipment supply such as headphone, keyboard, etc.	7%	Monitor, Scanner, Printer
	Better work space at home	10%	If post would loan office desks and chairs to tele-workers
Others Issues	No PC email access	3%	Communication issue
	Work Life Balancing	7%	Childcare and Flexible Work Hours
	Management issues	13%	Filing of online time sheet, meeting planning, telework related policy issue, PC vehicle use
	No problem	28%	No issues with current telework arrangements

PCV Reentry:

Please mark the answer that best describes the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements

Almost 80% of respondents believe that the people in their community and local partners would feel comfortable with vaccinated PCV re-entry at the time of survey. Even more respondents believe that community members would be comfortable if PCVs were to return "in the next 12 months". More than 95% of respondents strongly agreed (60.7%) or agreed (34.4%) that they are confident to perform their job well when PCVs re-enter to their post.

Questions	Mean	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
QA1- People in your community will feel comfortable with vaccinated Peace Corps Volunteer re-entry to your communities now .	4.08	38.0%	37.9%	18.7%	4.6%	0.8%
QA2- People in your community will feel comfortable with vaccinated Peace Corps Volunteer re-entry to your communities in the next 12 months .	4.26	43.1%	42.3%	12.7%	1.5%	0.3%
QA3- Local partners who have direct contact with Peace Corps Volunteers will feel comfortable with vaccinated Peace Corps Volunteer re-entry now .	4.13	39.2%	39.2%	17.3%	3.9%	0.5%
QA4- Local partners who have direct contact with Peace Corps Volunteers will feel comfortable with vaccinated Peace Corps Volunteer re-entry in the next 12 months .	4.28	43.7%	42.4%	12.1%	1.5%	0.3%
QA5- I am confident that I will be able to perform my job well when vaccinated Peace Corps Volunteers re-enter to my post.	4.55	60.7%	34.4%	4.3%	0.3%	0.2%

IV. Appendix A

Acronym List

The acronyms below are commonly used in the Peace Corps and throughout this report.

AFR	Africa Region
EMA	Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region
EVS	Employee Viewpoint Survey
FSN	Foreign service national
HCN	Host country national
HCS	Host country staff
HCSS	Host Country Staff Survey
IAP	Inter-America and the Pacific Region
OSIRP	Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning
PG	Performance goal in the agency's Strategic Plan
PSC	Personal services contractor
USDH	U.S. direct hires

Methodology and Data Interpretation: Why We Focus on Global Findings

This report focuses on global results for two primary reasons. First, global insights provide “the big picture” for how supervisors can enact positive behaviors to support employee satisfaction and performance. While individual circumstances may vary among staff at different posts, the insights that are received from employees around the world are the ones that are most likely to produce positive results once they are acted upon at the local level.

Second, although the Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning (OSIRP) used all of the tools available to its research team to increase the validity of the HCSS data, some logistical and intercultural limitations persist. Challenges to validity, such as survey frame, coverage error, and the effects of intercultural interpretation of questions, are magnified at post levels of reporting, but global-level results can offer insights where respondents display consensus around results.

Limitations

Survey frame, a list of active Host Country Staff, was initially generated from the Personal Tracking System (PTS) and confirmed by regional offices. As such, the distribution of survey invitation by email limited participation to staff who do not have proper Peace Corps email and who are not in the PTS at the time of the survey.

Additionally, It is important to note that while staff may be literate in English, French, Russian or Spanish, some of the survey questions were originally designed by the Office of Personnel Management for use in the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, which is targeted to an American workforce. Concepts such as “LGBTQ+” may be unfamiliar to post staff who do not speak English as their native language. As a result, there may be barriers to participation embedded in the questions themselves, both in terms of the level of language that is used and in terms of underlying cultural concepts or norms.

Lastly, barriers to participation may be related to the time of year in which the survey is fielded (mid-August to early September). The timing of the survey could potentially limit the participation of staff if it conflicts with planned vacation schedules or periods when short-term contracts are not active.

Surveying Method: An Attempted Census

The HCSS attempts to reach all eligible staff, which is a non-sampling methodology also known as a census. Unlike sampling methodologies, census approaches cannot ensure with a known degree of confidence that those who respond to a survey are similar to those who do not respond. It is therefore important not to extrapolate the HCSS results to the eligible staff who did not participate in the survey, either because they chose not to respond, because they did not have a valid email address, or because they do not speak the survey's supported languages of English, French, Russian and Spanish.

French, Spanish, and Russian accounted for 20 percent of the responses to the 2021 survey.

2021 HCSS		
Language Selection	Count	Percentage
English	1242	80%
Spanish	185	12%
French	100	6%
Russian	34	2%
Grand Total	1561	100%

The HCSS Questionnaire: Intercultural Surveying

The HCSS Questionnaire was originally designed as an extension of the FEVS and closely mirrors several questions from that survey. It is notable, however, that those questions were originally designed for a very specific population: English-speaking federal employees who were well-acquainted with U.S. cultural and governmental norms. Consequently, the questions on the HCSS might be interpreted differently by—or be more or less sensitive to—host country staff who do not share this same cultural background. This limits the survey's comparability to Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey results and also complicates comparability when looking at data below the global level.

The issue of cross-cultural comparability is also compounded by translating the survey into multiple languages and by imperfect coverage of the languages spoken at post. As a result, the nature and extent of the effects of intercultural interpretation of the terms used in the survey is unknown.

V. Appendix B

Global Respondent Rates

The research team worked in cooperation with the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, the Office of the Chief Information Officer, and individual Regions and posts to assemble a survey distribution list that was as complete as possible. The distribution list, the survey frame, was limited to staff who have Peace Corps email and who are in the Personal Tracking System (PTS) at the time of survey.

Resulting from the confirmations from all three regional offices, 2043 Host Country Staff who have PC email addresses were identified and invited to the 2021 HCSS. In total, 1537 responses were received, which generated a response rate of 76% for 2021 survey.

Respondent Rates by Region: Africa (1 of 3)

	2021 HCSS		
	Count of Survey Invite	Completed Response (Sep 14, 2021)	Response Rate
Global	2043	1561	76%
Africa	990	706	71%
BENIN	28	25	89%
BOTSWANA	35	25	71%
CAMEROON	41	36	88%
COMOROS	15	12	80%
ESWATINI	26	26	100%
ETHIOPIA	76	33	43%
GAMBIA	35	18	51%
GHANA	44	29	66%
GUINEA	45	38	84%
KENYA	19	17	89%
LESOTHO	33	26	79%
LIBERIA	31	22	71%
MADAGASCAR	45	30	67%
MALAWI	43	29	67%
MOZAMBIQUE	44	35	80%
NAMIBIA	37	29	78%
RWANDA	40	31	78%
SENEGAL	76	59	78%
SIERRA LEONE	31	15	48%
SOUTH AFRICA	50	32	64%
TANZANIA	45	28	62%
TOGO	35	31	89%
UGANDA	50	36	72%
ZAMBIA	66	44	67%

Respondent Rates by Region: EMA (2 of 3)

	2021 HCSS		
	Count of Survey Invite	Completed Response (Sep 14, 2021)	Response Rate
Global	2043	1561	76%

EMA	549	425	77%
ALBANIA/MONTENEGRO	30	25	83%
ARMENIA	26	17	65%
CAMBODIA	27	25	93%
GEORGIA	36	22	61%
INDONESIA	44	38	86%
KOSOVO	23	19	83%
KYRGYZSTAN	34	28	82%
MOLDOVA	34	21	62%
MONGOLIA	22	16	73%
MOROCCO	40	32	80%
MYANMAR	18	17	94%
NEPAL	29	19	66%
NORTH MACEDONIA	25	23	92%
PHILIPPINES	37	34	92%
SRI LANKA	19	14	74%
THAILAND	30	23	77%
TIMOR-LESTE	25	17	68%
UKRAINE	50	35	70%

Respondent Rates by Region: IAP (3 of 3)

	2021 HCSS		
	Count of Survey Invite	Completed Response (Sep 14, 2021)	Response Rate
Global	2043	1561	76%
IAP	504	430	85%
BELIZE	21	17	81%
COLOMBIA	27	26	96%
COSTA RICA	35	33	94%
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	35	22	63%
EASTERN CARIBBEAN	24	22	92%
ECUADOR	44	38	86%
FIJI	18	15	83%
GUATEMALA	43	40	93%
GUYANA	23	19	83%
JAMAICA	22	17	77%
MEXICO	22	19	86%
PANAMA	46	35	76%
PARAGUAY	51	48	94%
PERU	41	36	88%
SAMOA	16	12	75%
TONGA	16	12	75%
VANUATU	20	19	95%

VI. Appendix C

About the Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning

OSIRP advances evidence-based management at the Peace Corps by guiding agency strategic planning; monitoring and evaluating agency-level performance and programs; conducting research to generate new insights in the fields of international development, cultural exchange, and Volunteer service; enhancing the stewardship and governance of agency data; and helping to shape agency engagement on high-level, government-wide initiatives.

Acknowledgments

OSIRP developed this survey to systematically tap into the enormous wealth of experience of a critically important segment of the Peace Corps family: our host country staff. The interest and support from the Peace Corps staff in the countries where this survey was conducted were critical to this endeavor. Our sincere appreciation is extended to the Office of Directors, Office of Global Operations, and Regional Offices for reviewing the survey materials and to the country directors at each post for their assistance in promoting participation in this survey. We also would like to extend special thanks to all of the post staff who helped to make the 2021 Host Country Staff Survey a success by participating in the survey.

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